

Avare Nagme







Avare

Avare · Avare Nağme – Wanderer Melody

I. The Field

A young man wakes on an endless field of grass under a wide sky. He looks barely seventeen. He does not know his name, or how he came to be here, or what the faint melody is that drifts across the grass and will not resolve into a song. There is nothing to do and nowhere to be. So he rises, and he wanders, aimlessly, without direction or purpose, the way an avare wanders.

He walks until the grass gives way to stone, and the stone becomes ancient ruins. Curious, he goes in. Inside is a library – shelves of old books in a language he somehow reads. He loses himself in them. And as he reads, a door he did not see grinds open across the chamber, spilling light from a room that glows.

He steps toward it. He steps in.

II. The City

The glow swallows him and spits him out into a city – vast, vertical, drowning in cold electric color, and crawling with things that should not exist. Behind him, where the portal was, there is only wall. The way back is simply gone.

He is afraid. Anyone would be. But fear is not a plan, and the city does not care, so he learns it. He learns its alleys and its rhythms, learns which faces to wear and when – he keeps a collection of masks, becoming no one in particular so that he can move through a place that wants him dead. Years pass this way. The frightened boy hardens into something quiet and dangerous.

The city is a hell of demons, and beneath them, people – surviving, suffering, dying in the dark under the towers. He watches it for a long time. And one night, brooding alone on the rooftops above the skyline, all of it rises in him at once: every loss he has witnessed, every cruelty, the weight of a whole world's pain pressing down.

He makes a decision. He jumps.

Alone, he drops into the streets and turns on the entire demon host – not picking them off, not surviving, but attacking, a single blade against an army that fills a world. It is impossible, and he does it anyway. When the last of them falls and the city is finally, wholly emptied of demons, a portal opens in the silence. He walks through it and vanishes.

III The Trio

He reappears in a green and living land, in his own plain clothes again, older and harder and still without a past. He wanders, as he always has.

The wandering nearly ends fast. A beast of the wild falls on him – bark and coiling vine, a thing grown half from forest and half from hunger – and it is winning. Then arrows of fire streak in from one side and a burst of magic from the other: a veteran archer and a young wizard, strangers, throwing themselves into the fight beside him. Together the three of them bring the beast down.

The wizard had seen him days before, in a town, buying a sword, and something made him want to follow – a feeling that this stranger might be a friend. When he saw the beast bearing down, he stopped thinking and stepped in. The old archer came with him. When it is over they trade names: the young wizard is Tansel, the grey-haired veteran with the fire-bow is Balaban, and the wanderer – reaching for a name and finding one waiting, though he cannot say from where – gives his as Eren.

They do not trade their histories. They simply fall into step, the way the lost do – taking quests, hunting monsters for coin, asking nothing of one another but the next road. They are good at it. And the road carries them, in time, to a border town that is dying.

The melody begins to play in earnest. Here begins Avare Nağme.

IV. The Town and the Tomb

The town is rotting from a plague that no remedy will touch. Looking for work, the three go into the inn, where adventurers slump over the tables, beaten and hollow-eyed, waiting out something they cannot fight. Balaban lingers a breath too long over the sickness in the air, and says nothing. The keeper behind the counter sells them potions and tells them what is happening to the town, then points them to the temple.

At the temple they meet the elder who tends it, and Neva, a huntress who has tended the dying here for years. The elder tells them a legend: long ago a great healer could cure any plague, until a greedy sultan sealed her away in a tomb beneath a mountain. Break the seal, he says, free the Healer, and the plague will end. Neva comes with them – her own brother is among the sick.

The road there turns dangerous. In a coastal city's library, a scholar wakes a magic map that shows the location of the ruins, and presses a pendant into Neva's hands.

As the party leaves, masked warriors in blue robes ambush them – street children scatter the four into separate alleys and squares, and the warriors drop from the rooftops in three simultaneous attacks. They wield magic; the party can only answer with steel, for the magic slides off these enemies like water. Then the warriors break off as suddenly as they came, and as they go, one of them holds Eren's eyes for a moment – a silent warning.

High on an overlook above the city, unseen by anyone below, three horned figures watch. One of them, a red-haired woman, hurls a glowing orb into the sky.

That night by the fire, Tansel tells the others about his older brother. His brother was an adventurer and a hero, gifted with magic. One day he came home sick. The boy tried to heal him with a spell he was not ready for. The magic twisted – something already festering inside his brother reacted violently – and he died right there before Tansel's eyes: black veins surging across his skin as his eyes sank into hollow black voids. His grieving parents threw him out, and he walked away into the dark in his brother's oversized coat and tall wizard hat, which he has not taken off since. By the fire, the others put their arms around him.



The campfire – Tansel tells them about his brother.

They fight through strange warding creatures in the outer ring and work deeper through old puzzles toward the hidden tomb. The blue-robed warriors strike again before the dust has settled, falling from broken arches and high stone ledges, magic flashing through the ruin, forcing the four apart before they can form a line.

Having learned from their first clash in the city that magic is useless against these masked warriors, not one of the party wastes a gesture on a spell. Every blade is out before the first masked man lands. But the masked warriors have learned too—leveraging their numbers, they hold their ground just out of reach, weaving overlapping volleys of force to keep the four pinned beneath a storm of light.

To survive, the four have to break inside that perimeter. Tansel acts instantly, throwing up a flickering protective sphere to absorb the brunt of the magical barrage and buy the party their footing. With the defensive anchor set, he unleashes his speed-magic and throws himself forward, transforming the smallest of them into a blinding blur.

He flashes straight through the deadly coordination of their spells, tearing past their reach to force the fight into the tight spaces where their long blades and magic fail them. He strikes low and fast beneath the long reach of grown men, utilizing a lethal, fluid discipline of rapid strikes, snapping low kicks, and hammering hand-strikes. He hunts the low line—shattering ankles, buckling knees, and finding the soft places under the guard. Warriors twice his size drop before they even register his presence, while his active buffs draw the rest of his party forward into the gap, keeping the blades of his companions moving faster and harder than they have any right to be.

With the line broken, the others answer with steel. Eren leads with the sword. Balaban slings the fire-bow across his back and meets the incoming pressure with the blade, immovable. Neva does the same—her magic bow flashes into existence out of reflex, but she dissolves the construct just as quickly, drawing her physical blade instead and never once standing still.

Then three horned strangers enter the clash, and they too fight stripped of magic. The large man breaks through the center with a battle axe, brutal and precise. The fiercer of the two red-haired women, fights reckless and close with a broad dagger and a fistful of belt knives. The quieter one never closes at all—she works from the edges of the fight, and from a harness of throwing knives sends blade after blade through the blind angles the rest cannot see, each one finding a gap no sword could reach. For a moment the ruin becomes a storm of steel and blue light.

In the middle of it, the masked leader stiffens. His head turns toward the ground beneath them. Another spell gathers in his hand—then dies there. He signals sharply, and the others break away at once. Just like before, they vanish when the fight has barely revealed its shape. The party still does not understand what they saw: that each time the warriors' own magic flared, something deep beneath the stone flickered and dimmed, as if the spells were unmaking the very thing the warriors had come to guard.

Afterward, the three strangers give their names: Doruk, who leads them; Esin, whose magic throws spark and fire; and Sefin, the quiet, precise one. Wandering adventurers, they claim, passing through by chance and only wishing to help.

Once the way to the crypt is open, the three offer to hold the entrance against anyone who follows. The four accept the help and go on.

The party enters the tomb chamber alone and finds the sealed tomb at its heart. Then the temple elder – the same one from the dying town – steps out of a hidden passage.

He tells them the truth: a glowing orb had been guiding him along the party's exact route through the city and the ruins, all the way to this door. The mercenaries were always his. He has been steering them here from the start.

The elder and Tansel begin the rite to break the seal. As they work, Neva turns to the chamber walls and reads what is carved there – and the legend curdles. The healer was no saint imprisoned by a greedy sultan. In her own lifetime her gift turned: the same touch that had cured the sick began to wither them. Her healing became a corrupting touch. With their healer lost, the people had no cure

for the plagues, and the sultan ordered his scholars to find one. Through long experiments they discovered the formula for healing potions – and the sultan had the corrupting healer sealed away with a binding spell, to keep her alive until a cure could be found for her too. But no cure ever came. The sultan died, his kingdom vanished, and the healer was forgotten. The sealing passed into legend as the work of a greedy king.

Neva turns to stop the rite. Too late. The elder completes it. The seal breaks.

What rises is a woman shattered and radiant and wrong. She turns to those who freed her and makes a vow: under her watch, the weak will be protected, armed with raw strength, delivered from pain. No one will ever suffer again the way they made her suffer.

She reaches for the elder kneeling before her, and where she touches him he is unmade and remade – prayer-chains fusing into bone, sacred text crawling across swelling flesh, the devout old man swallowed whole into a vast horned beast. The party throws everything it has at the monster in a desperate, sweeping battle through the collapsing chamber, and at terrible cost they bring it down. The radiant woman long vanished through the broken ceiling is gone, out into the world.

They climb out after her to hunt her down – and stop at the mouth of the ruins. Below them the land is already turning: a sickness spilling outward from her in every direction, people and creatures corrupted, the world tipping into ruin. They came to cure a plague. They have loosed the end of the world. The weight of it nearly breaks them apart on that mountainside.

V. Pandora

Below the ruins the battle is already vast. The masked warriors – seal-wardens, descendants of the sultan's royal guard: the Kut Nöker – throw off restraint and unveil a hidden arsenal of relic-weapons, a churning, industrial-scale clash of warriors and sacred craft against an endless tide of the transformed. Doruk, Esin, and Selin are already down in it, fighting hard, and no longer for any paycheck.

Tansel breaks the paralysis: a furious gesture toward the carnage – everyone is fighting, what are we doing up here – and Balaban watches the horned three risk their lives alongside other adventurers for nothing, and the four go down into the war.

Days blur into nights of smoke and crackling magic. They fight without rest, without hope of victory, only the grim certainty that if this line falls, their world falls with it. Wave after wave of the

corrupted crash against them. The resistance shrinks, the ground grows slippery with blood and ash, yet they hold.

Only after what feels like an eternity of slaughter does a scout stagger into the headquarters carved into the rock. His voice is raw. The spreading corruption is everywhere – everywhere except around one lone magic portal. There an injured animal lies resting, completely untouched, as though the corruption itself cannot cross the threshold. No one understands why.

Maps are slammed onto tables. Voices crack with exhaustion and desperate hope. The debate is raw, urgent, almost feral.

The party steps forward.

Without hesitation, they volunteer to find out what lies beyond that impossible sanctuary. The resistance parts for them like a dying army giving its last blessing.

The four walk through the gate.

VI. The Worlds

World 1 – The Drained City

Beyond the portal: a clean, bright, impossible city – soaring towers and lean colorful machines, a glittering ring of wealth above a drowned lower city of the forgotten. Their clothes and weapons reshape on the crossing into sleek futuristic forms, the same warriors re-styled for a world of light and steel.

They wander it warily at first, trying to make sense of the place, gathering what they can – until the city's forces turn on them as intruders with no papers and no right to exist, and the fighting starts. And in that fighting comes a shock: among the city's war-beasts are creatures from their own world – armored, wired, and somehow controlled. The party knows these animals' every movement by instinct and cuts them down with an ease no local fighter could manage. From the shadows, rebels watch, and afterward they approach.

The rebels are losing a quiet war against the corporation that owns this world. Caelirete drains the living current straight out of the land, the water, every growing thing, and runs it through its reactors as power – the energy that lights the towers and feeds the machines. The beasts it takes for something else: captured alive, their wills clamped by bridle-rigs and their bodies rebuilt into controlled

weapons and guardians. That theft is the whole of the rebels' war. And something in it stirs the party. The current Caelirete strips from this world looks like the same life they have always known – the life behind Tansel's magic and Balaban's fire and the dying plague back home – here, in a world so alien and yet so familiar.

The rebels plan an infiltration into a tower-core to steal internal data. The plan is bold, fast, desperate. Balaban cannot leave it alone. Every route they mark, he sees an exposed flank. Every escape path, a trap. Every strike point, the civilians underneath it. He keeps stepping in, correcting, warning, cutting holes in the plan – but never taking command of it. The others feel the contradiction before they understand it: he thinks like a commander, yet refuses to stand as one.

The pressure finally reaches him. The room, the maps, the waiting faces, the expectation of a decision – all of it closes around him, and for a moment the old archer is no longer in the rebel hideout. He is younger, standing over a war table with danger moving toward his homeland. He sees the enemy before it arrives; he chooses the preventive strike. His family begs him to stay. His town needs him there, not on the road at the head of armed men chasing a threat that has not yet crossed the gate. He leaves anyway. The road becomes an ambush. The attack collapses. His men die around him, and he survives alone. When he returns there is no victory and no home left to defend – only smoke where his town stood, and the people he meant to save gone, and his family gone, and his decision.

The memory releases him. Now the others understand the shape of him – why he warns, why he follows, why he moves with the group once the group decides, and why he will never again let the weight of a command pass through his hands. He does not reclaim leadership. He gives only what he can bear to give: one hard, precise correction to the route, enough to keep the plan from becoming the same old grave.

They join the raid – and pay for it. The tower-core they breach buckles, and the collapse hurts the lower city worse than anyone meant: a hard first lesson that even a righteous strike crushes the small first. Deeper inside they find the captive-banks – beasts from a dozen worlds, wills clamped and severed, bodies turned into living weapons. And in the secured data they find the reason for all of it. Caelirete detected, long before anyone else, that the life-force is fading – slowly, everywhere, across every world its instruments could reach. It did not understand why, or how to stop it. But it has to outlast it: strip out whatever living current remained while it still could, lock it into dead machine power, and build a world that would keep running after the life was gone. Not greed – hoarding,

coldly and methodically, against a coming dark. It is the first the party hears that the fading is real, and far larger than their own cursed home.

They take the data including a map of a gate-network, and the way onward. The last guardian is a colossal enslaved beast; they survive it long enough to break the rig controlling its mind, and the freed animal turns on its captors and tears the facility apart while they escape. They have hurt the corporation. They have not stopped it. And it has seen them now.

The Hunt

The corporation studies every trace they left – a trail running back toward the world they came from. Along it the corporation finds three mercenaries who already know these four, who have already fought them, and who already know how they move. They are expendable. Far better to send them across the unstable gates than risk their own men. So it hires the best hunters available: the three horned strangers – Doruk, Esin, and Selin – paid now to chase the party across the worlds.

So the journey becomes a chase. Through World 2, a world of neon streets fought block by block toward the next gate. Through World 3, an absurd, rule-breaking cosmos where physics itself lies – and where, impossibly, the same faint living current still glimmers in everything that lives and dies. The gate out of it into the next world fights them the whole way through, flickering and buckling, rougher than any crossing before.

World 4 – The Cult

They do not understand the rough crossing until they arrive. World 4 is a place of candlelit dread and old monsters, and it is being bled dry; the current here has been drained so low that every threshold has gone unstable, and a crossing barely holds.

They learn its shape slowly, the way they learn every world – by what they walk into, what they find left behind, and what the living tell them. Long ago this world raised an order to fight the corruption. But killing the corrupted beasts changed nothing: the current kept thinning, more kept turning, and nothing they did gave back what had been drained. Watching the beasts hollow everything they touched, the order drew the conclusion that lay in plain sight – the monsters are devouring the world's life; stop them, harness them, and the world recovers. A second, darker conclusion grew as the first kept failing: if the life cannot be saved, then a world without it is a world

without magic, and whoever holds a weapon that needs none will rule what is left. So the order became a cult, set on breaking and mastering the beasts themselves, raising an army that feeds on the very thing draining the world.

Some of these monsters came through another portal, now held under a strange alien seal. To force that gate and hold it open, the cult burns the only fuel strong enough: people sensitive to the current, drained of their life essence to feed the working. Through the torn gate they haul corrupted beasts, alive, for the cages and the dissection tables – strong, fresh-crossed things pulled straight from the unknown beyond. Many die in the crossing, or come through broken and uncontrollable, so the gate must be torn open again and again, the dead fuel replaced, more taken. Sometimes one breaks loose before it can be caged, vanishing into the countryside as another nameless monster on the roads. No one connects the horror to the cult, because no one is meant to.

The four find the cult's records, and the gate it guards, and a colder detail folded into the same map they carry: the corporation's gate-network marks this threshold too – and marks it blank. Its own scouts crossed here once and never returned; the archives hold no data on what lies beyond, only a dead signal. Whoever goes through that gate does not come back to file a report. Expedition after expedition has crossed and gone silent, and every world that touches this threshold has written it off as death.

And yet the living current runs strongest through that very gate – pulling at the four the way the melody pulls at Eren on the field. They do not know what waits beyond, only that the pull is real and that it leads where every other map ends.

So they go to it – and walk into the working itself: the captives drained and dying in their chains to keep the gate open, the cages, the beasts hauled half-dead from the dark. They do not cross. They attack. The cult turns its broken, half-mastered beasts loose on them, and the fight tears through the ritual-hall at the gate's mouth – the hardest the four have fought since the tomb. They cut the cult down and free the captives.

But the gate was only ever held open by the working, and the working dies with its casters. The threshold buckles, then tears itself apart – and the current the four have been chasing roars up through the collapse and takes them with it, flinging them through in the most violent crossing yet. The horned three reach the hall at that last instant, their quarry vanishing into a closing wound in the world. To follow is to leap into the threshold every map marks as death; to turn back is to lose the four forever.

The quest team went through, so they must know something – and the trio leaps. The gate howls shut behind all seven of them.

World 5 – The Last Line

They are thrown out of the portal into a war. World 5 is a world the corruption has already won – its lands overrun, its people all but gone – and what remains of them has gathered for a last stand around one of the great portal-nodes, the fixed gateways that bind the worlds together. They have sealed this node from their own side, deliberately, to wall the corruption inside their dying world so it can never spread up the network into all the others. That seal is the only thing standing between the ruin and every world still breathing. Holding it is the whole of their war: warships burning in the sky like falling mountains, machines launching, an exhausted wall of armored soldiers throwing themselves against an endless tide of the transformed that batters the node from within, trying to break through to the rest of creation.

And here, for the first time, the cosmos opens to them. The defenders know exactly what they protect, and they say it plainly. This node is an artery of a single great Tree – Bayterek – whose living current is the thing every world names differently without knowing it is one and the same. What Eren's own world calls Kut. That current is failing. A true healer, they say, is not someone who makes power but a clear channel through whom the Tree's life flows into the sick – a transmitter. And the thing the party has been fighting blind all this way finally has a name: the corruption is not a force or a creature with a will. It is what is left where the current has been pulled out – the hollow that remains when a thing is emptied of Kut. A hollowed beast can still be cut down, its body ended like any other. But the emptiness itself cannot be cured. There is nothing left to call back, no way to pour life into a husk and make it whole, and putting one down does nothing to stop the next from turning. That is why every defense fails in the end – you can kill the corrupted forever and never once touch the corruption. And it is why the bled world's cult was wrong: the beasts were never devouring anything. The Kut is not being eaten. It is being pulled inward, away from the worlds, into the dying core of the Tree itself.

And the four understand, all at once, what they unsealed. The woman in the tomb was one of these transmitters. When the current reversed, her channel reversed with it: the Tree's life stopped flowing out through her and began to be dragged back in, so that her healing touch became a draining one. She was never cursed and never wicked. She was a channel left open while the river ran backward. The horror of the tomb finally has its name.

And here they learn why no one ever came back from this place. Once, when World 5 still held life, the node ran both ways and people crossed freely – that is how the Caelirete corporation's scouts and the earlier adventurers reached it at all. None of them vanished or died unseen. They came, they saw what was being held back and what it would cost the worlds if the line broke, and they stayed. Every one of them stayed to fight. That is why no report ever went home, why the corporation's map marks the place blank, why the bled world counts it as death: the truth of this place keeps whoever reaches it, and the only ones who learn what it protects become defenders too.

The defenders couldn't answer in kind to the seal ruptures of their portal from the other side. They cannot open from within without breaking the seal they built; the smallest widening risks the whole breach tearing open. The door they shut, they shut on themselves – no warning carried out, nothing to do but hold. And for as long as any of them can remember they have felt that seal wrenched at, again and again, from the far side: something out there prying the door open. That wrenching has just stopped. The four crossed in on its last working, hurled through as the gate collapsed, and they carry the reason it will never open from that side again – the thing that was prying it is dead, and they are the ones who killed it.

Here the horned hunters catch them a final time – and here the truth dissolves the contract. The world-axis is dying, and if it dies, nothing any of them serve survives. The bounty shrinks to almost nothing beside what these defenders are giving their lives for. The hunt cracks. One by one, weapons lower. The three join the four.

Together the seven throw in at the one place that matters – the collapsing defensive line itself, where the army of the transformed threatens to overwhelm the final perimeter guarding the node. Driven into a frenzy by the portal's recent instability, the endless tide batters the exhausted wall of soldiers. Through the burning sky and the launching machines, the seven fight to drive the vanguard back and buy the defenders enough time to plug the gap in the line before the entire fortress is overrun. The perimeter holds; the node lives. They do not save the universe. They keep one more artery of the dying Tree from being conquered – one stay against the collapse, bought for a little longer. Watching soldiers die anonymous for a current that will never record their names, something in the four settles for good: glory and reward and being remembered weigh nothing beside the flow.

There is no way onward from here, and no way back. The seal cannot be broken from within without dooming everything it holds; this node was the last, and it leads nowhere further. But the oldest of the defenders sees what hangs at Neva's throat – and stops. They know that stone, a key

cut long ago from the source itself to open the way to the nexus. They had come to believe none survived, and here one walks in around the neck of a huntress who does not know what she carries.

The old commander brings forward the order's oldest, uncorrupted records. The charts speak of the nexus, the point that lies between all worlds. But the maps reveal a brutal catch: that ancient gateway does not lie within the safety of these walls. It rests in a lightless, exposed high tower of the old world-capital, miles out across the ruined skyline already swarmed by the transformed. The main army cannot abandon the fortress walls, so the commander assembles a small, elite squad of veteran scouts to act as an escort. Slipping out through an elevated launch-port, this small group ventures across the shattered bridges and burning walkways of the dead city, threading through the blind spots of the corrupted.

The quiet infiltration fractures into a frantic scramble as the beasts catch their scent. The veterans throw themselves into the path of the oncoming creatures, sacrificing themselves one by one to hold the narrow passages and keep a clear lane open for the seven. Several scouts drop back to anchor a choking point against the pursuing tide, while the remaining handful forces the party ahead into the final clearing.

The seven reach the ancient site, where a ring of dead stone sits within the ruins, sealed and lightless for longer than any of them has been alive. There Neva lifts the pendant, and it answers: the light gathers, the dead ring wakes, and a vortex spins open where none had stood in living memory. The surviving defenders who ran the gauntlet with them look on the way out they could never take. They press the seven onward – go, reach the source, end this – and turn back toward the path to face the oncoming transformed. The party steps through; behind them the vortex closes on the sound of a battle that will not be won.

WORLD 6 – Echoes

Beyond the vortex is the nexus itself – a still point between all worlds, ways branching off it in every direction, more than any map could hold. They do not have to choose. The pendant pulls, steady as a held breath, and they follow it through.

The last gate opens onto green ruin – mechanical wildlife grazing through collapsed gardens, trees rising through sacred machines, clear rivers running over dead cities. Beautiful. And, they slowly realize, the place where everything began.

The ruin tells its own history to anyone who walks it long enough, and they piece it together as they go. This was once the most radiant civilization ever joined to the Tree. Its people learned to draw life straight from the portal-springs and built a paradise of healing cities and living temples and portal-craft. But the paradise ran on endless drawing, and they drew until the source could no longer renew – and the cosmic Tree, to save its own dying core, began pulling its life inward instead of giving it outward.

The full scale of it breaks over them at last – not one cursed land but a single Tree straining to keep every world alive. They are very small, and the mystery only deepens the more they understand.

The Relic in the Core

The pendant's pull brings them directly to the heart of the dead capital—a massive, vaulted Sovereign-forge built directly around the dormant Kut reservoir that feeds the entire gateway network. At the center of the chamber, wedged deep into an ancient anvil pedestal, sits a sword.

It is heavily oxidized, and plain to look at. When Eren pulls it from the stone, it feels entirely dead—heavy, unbalanced, and freezing cold to the touch – a discarded relic left behind to rot.

The Trial of the Sovereign Forge

To access the sealed reservoir of current locked behind the Kut reservoir, they must activate the ancient forge mechanics. The moment Eren claims the dormant vessel, the automated defense systems register a critical security breach. These are pristine machine-guardians built to protect the primary conduit from misuse.

The battle erupts instantly. Doruk and Balaban form a defensive wall at the chamber entrance, keeping waves of mechanical sentries from flooding the altar. Behind them, Esin and Selin provide

mid-row magical support, casting fire spells and launching traditional arrows to suppress the tactical security squads pinning the party down.

At the center, a colossal guardian of brass and living wire wakes to reclaim the blade. Tansel steps directly into the line of fire, using his magic to project shields and overload the guardian's power conduits, burning through his own reserves to hold the entity down while Eren and Neva strike its exposed power core, silencing the ancient machine for good.

The Reforging and Restoration

With the forge guardian cleared, the chamber falls into a tranquil silence. Eren places the dull, rusty blade back onto the anvil altar. He turns to Neva, and she understands before he asks. She lifts the diamond-shaped pendant from her throat—it has done its last guiding, brought them to the place it was always pulling toward.

She steps to the altar and seats the pendant's crystal directly into the empty housing of the sword's hilt. The fit is seamless. A sharp mechanical click echoes through the chamber as the crystal locks into place.

The forge mechanics instantly ignite, siphoning the small, localized pool of residual Kut left within the room's internal cells. This minor current surges up through the anvil, but it doesn't just pass through the weapon—the newly inserted crystal acts as the missing spark plug, opening the sword's internal channels.

The blade acts like a massive lightning rod, aggressively drinking the local light and driving it through the steel. In a quick, blinding flash, the rushing energy purges centuries of oxidation, instantly sharpening the blunt iron into a razor-thin line of pure force. As the light settles, the weight of the sword shifts perfectly in Eren's hand, becoming weightless, balanced, and alive. The legendary Kut sword is finally whole, awake, and attuned. It is an empty vessel engineered to carry the network's life-force, and with the crystal locked in, it is finally ready to act as a weapon and a master key. Whatever the sword is for, it is his to carry now

The Network Overrides

The central altar reveals that the ancients did not store their energy in one vulnerable place; the main Kut reserves are locked behind three secondary containment vaults situated across the capital ruins, each anchored by its own automated security grid. Using the newly awakened Kut sword to

interface with the terminals, the party maps a tactical route through the dead city. They move from vault to vault in a rapid, coordinated campaign, fighting through specialized tactical machine-guardians defending each node. At each location, Eren drives the active blade into the vault conduits, using its synchronized frequency to release the security locks. One by one, the isolated sub-reservoirs open, their unreleased current routing back into the primary central pipeline.

The Restoration and Surge

With all nodes overridden, the seven return to the central Sovereign-forged, where the combined volume of the entire network's locked-away current sits pressurized beneath the floor. Eren steps to the master interface, lifting the fully attuned blade, and drives it deep into the main reservoir-conduit to release the entirety of the ancients' stolen hoard back to the source.

The ethereal force floods out of the reservoirs and pours directly back into the primary portal-spring of the nexus. For a moment – nothing. The reserves run entirely empty, the last of the stored life given back, and the world holds its breath as though they had poured water into sand.

Until it surges.

Up out of the wound, down through the conduits, and across the whole length of Bayterek – the cosmic axis gone dark for so long taking the light all at once and carrying it. It races through the portals into every world the four have crossed.

Across all worlds, the same awakening ripples through the dark: the sick can heal again, and across burned ground where nothing should grow again, faint sparks wake in dead earth and dead water. The heavy, suffocating pressure shifts as the radiant, flowing streams of Kut spread across the sky of the Party's home world, weakened mages feeling the old fire kindle back into their hands. Simultaneously, World 5's choked node of the held line flares bright, and the tide that battered it is instantly starved of its momentum, its ranks no longer renewing as the network's spiritual anchor solidifies and locks the perimeter into place for the exhausted defenders. Down along the bled world 4, every flickering threshold instantly steadies, locking into place with crystalline clarity before brightening into a warm, calm glow as the surviving Kut-sensitives feel the current return.

The same light runs through all of it – Kut, running outward from the primary spring to the last leaf of the network, mending the connections and blazing the gates open and steady down the whole network of the Tree.

But restored flow bleeds away while an active drain keeps tearing at the network – and the largest is the Caelirete corporation in the bright city, which knows nothing of this place, would never believe it, and cannot be reasoned with. A mended pipeline is worthless while a wound keeps bleeding. So the alliance turns back toward the bright city, to shut the drain off at its source.

The Shutdown

They return as enemies, hitting the industrial sector alongside the rising rebel front. The infiltration immediately leads to a major battle encounter in the heart of the complex. There are no automated machine-fighters here – only ranks of heavily armed corporate security forces and defensive lines of cybernetically enhanced beasts fitted with steel plating and neural bridle-rigs.

The seven engage the enemy as a singular, cohesive battle party. Balaban and Doruk spearhead the frontline formation, holding the aggro, shattering the corporate infantry's physical shields, and drawing the brunt of the incoming gunfire. Behind them, Esin and Selin provide mid-row magical support, casting fire spells and launching traditional arrows to suppress the tactical security squads pinning the party down.

When the Caelirete unleashes the cybernetic guard beasts, Neva executes her high-speed combat skills directly from the party's backline. Moving with blistering speed within the battle formation, she unleashes a rapid-fire volley of high-velocity magical arrows in a sweeping arc with absolute precision. Her magical projectiles bypass the beasts' armor plating, striking and shattering the heavy mechanical bridle-rigs clamping their heads.

The moment the neural clamps spark out, the status effect breaks and the beasts' natural minds surface. They instantly turn on the corporate handlers standing behind them, tearing through the enemy's own backlines before fleeing the battlefield. With the enemy formation in complete chaos, Tansel casts a high-tier spell to disrupt the electronic reactor-glyphs powering the facility, while Eren uses his combat insight to read the predictable assault patterns of the remaining corporate soldiers, delivering the final, decisive strikes.

With the defensive forces cleared, the party steps up to the central control deck, shutting down the primary command-nodes and severing the power conduits. Without a stable feedback loop, the extraction network suffers a catastrophic failure. The massive reactors overload, shatter, and explode, completely destroyed.

The corporate empire's stranglehold on the life-force of the land and water is shattered out in the open. The single worst artificial wound in the Tree is closed. Only now, with the flow restored at the primary spring and the corporate drain permanently destroyed, can they go home.

III. Atonement

They come home to a world that has not waited for them. The land is a battlefield – corrupted hollow beasts and broken people against the adventurers, the Kut Nökers, the surviving defenders. The three former hunters fight at the party's side now. The Tree's current runs outward again beneath all of it – but she does not turn with it. Mending the Tree was never going to mend her. The centuries did not leave a transmitter simply running backward, a thing that could be set right; they grew something else in her place, the way a tumor grows, until the woman who once channeled life was gone and only the hungering thing that wears her remained.

And there she is, at the heart of the ruin she has spread – awake, and deliberate. She reaches into everything alive within her reach and pulls the Kut out of it, leaving armored, hollow husks where people stood. She is the deepest wound in the world.

Doruk, Esin, and Selin make the ring. The large man anchors the center against the press of husks; Esin's fire and Selin's arrows clear every hollow thing that lunges in, so that the working at the middle of them is never broken, never touched. They are not in the strike. They are the reason the strike is allowed to happen.

Balaban's fire tears open the hollowing field that turns every approach to dust – a single seam of heat held open by an old archer who has finally made his peace with what one decision can buy. Tansel pours speed and strength and shield into the other three and holds them there, burning himself down to keep them whole, the boy in his dead brother's coat keeping four people alive with the same gift that once killed one.

And Neva does the thing only she can do. She has read this woman from the first chamber – read her as a channel and not a monster – and she reads her still, through the husks and the hunger, watching for the half-second no one else would catch. Her arrows keep Eren on his feet through the field, a steady line of life threaded into him as he closes; and at the breaking instant, when the corrupted shell splits and the woman buried inside surfaces for less than a breath, it is Neva who sees it, and names it, and holds Eren's aim true – there, the split, not the shell.

Eren strikes through the gap with the pendant-crystal blade in his hands, the Tree's restored current loaded into it, six worlds of borrowed motion in his arms – and drives it home, forcing the full living flow into the corrupted thing all at once, into the channel and not the husk.

The corrupted shell cannot hold living Kut. The flood surges through it and burns it out from the inside, and for one breaking instant, as the corruption is scoured away, the woman buried within surfaces – and the last thing the real transmitter does, in the half-second she is herself again, is let the current pour outward the way it was always meant to: the plague burning out of the land at its source, green climbing over dead ground in a single breath. Then there is nothing left of her to hold even that. She comes apart in the light, finally still – and at last, finally free.

VIII. What It Cost

The fighting ends. The world does not come back. What the hollowing took, it keeps – the husks do not wake, the dead stay dead, the scars hold in the land like old burns. Neva's brother is among the ones who never come back; somewhere in the fighting she had already done the thing she will not speak about, with her own hands.

IX. The Summons

When it is over, Neva goes home. The temple elder is gone; the temple, the surviving sick, the long work of mending fall to her now, and that work does not release her to wander. She takes her leave of the three of them on the road – a look held with Eren a moment too long, and then her back, getting smaller. It is the parting of someone with somewhere to be.

Avare Nağme ends here.

Eren has nowhere. He stays with Balaban and Tansel. And then, in a still place apart from them, he meets and talks to an ancient being – vast, rooted, old as the Tree, with eyes that hold the whole shape of things. It speaks to him alone, and what it says he has no way to understand: his time here is finished, and he must go home, now. There is an urgency in it that does not belong to this world at all, a pull from somewhere on the far side of everything. A portal stands open at his back that was not there before.

He says goodbye to the old archer and the boy without being able to explain, and steps into the light.

X The Reflection

An old man wakes in a pod, wired into a machine by a tangle of cables, dead screens glowing around him in a room of steel and red light. He pulls himself free and stumbles out into the world.

He walks a bright future street, hooded, hunched, slow, threading through a crowd that flows around him without seeing him – out of place, out of time. He drifts to a shop window and stops. He leans close to the glass, and a worn face stares back – hollow-eyed, slack with shock, lined and white-haired. He presses a trembling hand to the glass, and the reflection presses back. The horror is not who the reflection is; it is that the reflection is him. The wasted old face in the window is the one he is wearing. He is this old man – a digital addict who climbed into a dream and never climbed out, who poured an entire life into a green world of swords and the Tree while his real body wasted away in the tube behind him.

Before he can take a breath against it, something pulls – hard, from far away – and the street, the glass, the broken old face are torn backward out of him.

The Bridge into Avaré

He wakes on the field of grass, young again, the melody playing, and the two of them are standing over him, waiting. He tells them he cannot stay – his body is dying. They tell him it was an emergency; they had no choice. They need him.

Tansel holds out the Kut sword and urges him to wield it again. Eren accepts.

Three figures stand on the green where there should be four. Balaban, grey and steady. Tansel next to him. Eren with the blade in his hand. And the long grass beside them, bent by no one, where Neva does not stand and will not come. They turn their horses and ride into the hills, the empty place riding with them, and the melody carries them out.



Ever onward.